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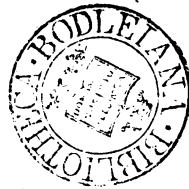
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EVENING CONVERSATIONS.

EVENING CONVERSATIONS

ON

THE APOSTLES' CREED, THE TEN
COMMANDMENTS, AND THE
LORD'S PRAYER.



BY THE AUTHORESS

*Of "Trust in God and Use the Means," "Scripture Characters
and Letters."*

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*THESE Conversations were first written
for the benefit of the Sunday-school at H——,
and are now published in the hope that they
may be of use to other Schools.*



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EVENING CONVERSATIONS ON
THE APOSTLES' CREED.





CHAPTER I.

“MOTHER, will you help me with the Catechism? I think I can now repeat the Apostles’ Creed, but I do not understand it much.”

“If you and Jesse will come to me every evening after tea, I will try and explain the Creed to you both.”

“Oh, thank you,” exclaimed Amelia.

At the time appointed Jesse and her sister Amelia came to their mother with their prayer-books and Bibles. They both repeated the Creed to their mother’s satisfaction, who said,—“The words you have just used are called the Apostles’ Creed, because it is supposed they were written about the time, or soon after the time of the

Apostles ; they also express what they believed and taught. Some persons say this Creed (as it now stands) was written by the Apostles themselves ; but of this, of course, we cannot be certain.

“The word *Creed* is taken from the Latin ‘Credo,’ ‘I believe.’ So much as a sort of introduction to the Creed ; and now we will take each sentence of it.

“‘I believe in God the Father Almighty.’ Put this in different words, and it is simply this : I believe that God has the power to do whatever He pleases in heaven and earth.

“Remember that every clause of this Creed can be proved true, because each is found in the Bible ; and no one is obliged to believe what is not written in the Bible, or cannot be proved thereby. Now prove that God is Almighty, able to do all He wills, and that He made ‘heaven and earth.’”

Jesse.—“God calls Himself Almighty in speaking to Abraham.” (She reads Gen. xvii. 1).

Amelia.—“In Psalm viii. 3, God is said to have



ordained the moon and stars, and heaven is called 'the work of his fingers.' "

"Yes; and look at Psalm cxlvi. 5, 6. These are enough to prove the truth of this sentence, so now read the next: 'And in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord.' This, you see, mentions the second person of the Trinity, God the Son. To find the simple meaning of the name Jesus, read Matthew i. 21."

"Oh, I know without looking; it means Saviour."

"The name Jesus is literally made up of *two* words, 'Jah' or 'Je,' which means Jehovah, or God; and *Oshea*, which means Saviour; so we have God and Saviour in the one name. What does the second name of our Lord (Christ) mean, Jesse?"

"I do not know."

"Does it not mean anointed? though I do not exactly understand what being anointed is," said Amelia.

"It does. To anoint a person was simply to

pour oil on his head, which signified he was set apart for some particular office or employment. The ancients had three special offices; they anointed their prophets, priests, and kings. Our Saviour was anointed or set apart, not with oil, but by His baptism, to be *each of these*; Prophet, Priest, and King for us. No other person had ever before been anointed to *all* of these offices. I will try and show you how Jesus Christ fulfilled each of them. The prophets were those who foretold events which one day came to pass; but they were also the *teachers* of the people. In both these ways was our Saviour a prophet. He foretold His own death and resurrection, the destruction of Jerusalem, &c., and was He not a teacher? 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and *learn of me*: for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light;' these are His own gracious words; and think also of the many lessons He

taught in the parables ; for instance, the one from which the text was taken a few Sundays ago, the Marriage of the King's Son, which taught that though many may have the Gospel preached to them, have been baptized into the Church of Christ, and have many religious advantages, yet, that 'though many are *called*, few are chosen'—that of those who even for a time appeared to have been chosen, one was cast out, because 'he had not on a wedding garment.' He thought himself worthy and good enough to appear among the guests, and would not accept 'the wedding garment' (which it was then the custom to give to all the invited guests). Do you understand what is meant by this wedding garment ? ”

Is it not the righteousness of Christ, without which we cannot enter heaven ? ”

“ Yes, the beautiful robe of Christ's righteousness. Now I have shown you that Christ is our prophet in both senses of the word. We must go on and learn how He is our *Priest*. What had the Jewish priests to do, Amelia ? ”

"To offer sacrifices" (Heb. vii. 27).

"And to pray for themselves and the people," added Jesse.

"Both right. What had Jesus Christ to offer?"

"He offered up Himself," exclaimed both the children. Proved by Heb. x. 10—12.

"Does He pray for us?"

"Yes," Heb. vii. 25, and Rom. viii. 34.

"Was it necessary that *His* offering should, like that of the other priests, be repeated?"

"No."

"If you doubt, remember the words in Heb. x. 10, 'By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*.' These last words, 'once for all,' mean the offering was made *once*, and can never by any possibility be repeated. The Jewish priests and the sacrifices were done away when our Saviour had offered Himself. The word *priest* in the rubric of our prayer-book *does not* mean such priests as we are now speaking of, *not those* who offered sacrifices, but is only a shortening of the

word Presbyter or elder, a name given by our reformers to show they thought the sacrificing priesthood was quite done away with.

“ A king has power over, or rules, certain countries and nations, which are hence called his kingdom. He gives his subjects laws. Some are better than others ; they of course depend upon his character and the power he possesses. Christ has a kingdom to rule over, people to govern and give laws to ; but His is not an earthly kingdom, but a spiritual one. He must reign in our *hearts*, if He reign over us at all. If we only listen to and obey His laws, we shall find they are always wise and good, ‘not grievous.’ Our wills and affections must all be submitted to His authority, and then we may hope to live with Him hereafter for ever in ‘the glorious mansions in His Father’s house’ which ‘He has gone to prepare for those who are washed and forgiven.’ But now, my dear children, we must leave off, we have talked quite enough for one evening.”



CHAPTER II.

“WE left off at the words ‘Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord.’ It is customary, when in the Creed we acknowledge Christ to be ‘our Lord,’ to bow, as a token of our respect and obedience to Him as such. Some persons do so whenever the name of Jesus is mentioned. I say *customary*, because it is only a custom, there being no scriptural direction for it.

“‘Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.’ Prove the first part of this by reading Matt. i. 20. I need scarcely give you a verse to prove the Virgin Mary was the mother of Jesus.”

“Oh, no! here is one, Matt. i. 25.”

“And here is another,” added Jesse, “Luke ii. 7.”

“But can either of you tell me who had prophesied that our Saviour should thus be born of a Virgin?”

“Isaiah, was it not? I have forgotten the chapter, though.”

“Yes; it was Isaiah. Look at Isaiah vii. 14.”
(Jesse reads it).

“The name here mentioned, Immanuel, is explained in Matt. i. 23, so there can be no doubt, or mistake, as to *who* is here meant. What are the next words in the Creed?”

“Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried.”

“The Romans who lived in the country called Italy, had conquered the Jewish nation, and had taken away their king, and, instead, set a Roman governor over them. Pontius Pilate was one of these, and our Lord was brought before him to be judged. And it was under his command, while he was governor, that Jesus was crucified.

Can you tell me what great truth is proved by the death and burial of Christ ? ”

“ It showed He was a Man, does it not ? ”

“ Yes, for it was only as Man He could die ; God is eternal, and could never cease to exist. Crucifixion was the death that criminals usually suffered. It was a very painful, lingering death ; but our Saviour did not shrink from all this. He suffered in our stead, and He bore the weight of the sins of the whole world. Next come the words, ‘ He descended into hell.’ The word ‘ hell ’ has two meanings besides the one we now generally apply to it, which is the place of punishment. One meaning is the place of departed spirits, and the other is the grave. Both of these may be meant ; but a verse which David uses, in Psa. xvi. 10, inclines one to think the latter is intended, namely, simply the grave. Read the words, Amelia.”

“ Jesus was only three days in the grave, and therefore did not ‘ see corruption,’ for ‘ the third day He rose again from the dead.’ Now

sometimes the word *day* is used when only *part* of a day is meant, so that the Sunday following Good Friday would be the third day from it, reckoning *part* of Friday as one day. Our Saviour, by raising Himself from the grave, proved His Divinity (that is that He was God), just as His death proved His humanity or that He was man. Read Rom. i. 4.

“The resurrection was also a proof that God had accepted the sacrifice which Jesus had made as our substitute. It was, so to speak, putting the seal to a covenant. If Christ had *not* risen, we should not have been sure of *this*, and His enemies might have said that He was unable to return, and had imposed upon them.”

“Do you remember what Easter means?”

“Oh, yes; I think I do. It means ‘to rise.’”

“Yes. Now we must leave off. Good-night.”



CHAPTER III.

WHEN Jesse and Amelia joined their mother the next night, they said they had something to ask her. What do you think it was? It was this—that she would write down for them all their conversations on the Creed, so that in case they forgot any part of them, they might be able to read it over again. Their mother promised to write a part, if not all the conversations in a book, and lend it them now and then; and this is how you have the opportunity of reading their evening conversations, my dear children, and I hope you will profit by them as much as they did.

“Now we will go on with the Creed itself. We left off at our Lord’s Resurrection—next comes His Ascension. What do you mean by that?”

“ His going up into heaven. ‘ He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right-hand of God.’ ”

“ The *time* between the Resurrection and the Ascension is not, you see, *here* mentioned ; it is not strictly necessary for us to know it. Can you tell me how long it was ? ”

“ Forty days.” (See Acts i. 3).

“ Our Lord remained so long a time upon the earth, to prove to all who knew Him before, that He was the same Person who had been crucified. The marks in His hands, feet, and side, which the nails and spear had made, would still remain, and help to prove this, as they had before done to St. Thomas who doubted.

“ Who saw Jesus ascend ? Look at Acts i. 2, 9—11, and Luke xxiv. 33, 50—53.”

“ His disciples, apostles, and those that were with them.”

“ Think how much more likely the Gospel was to be believed, if those who preached it were able to say, ‘ I saw this or that thing happen myself.’ What are those called who have seen what they

tell others about? Don't you know? What are those persons who are called in our courts of law to declare what they know, or have heard, of the prisoner?"

"Oh, witnesses."

"Very well, and those who have actually *seen* what they declare or relate are called 'eye-witnesses.'

"I believe the history of St. Stephen is the only place in the Bible where our Lord is mentioned as '*standing* on the right-hand of God.' Do you remember? His servant was about to be put to death, and he 'looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right-hand of God.' (Acts vii. 55.)

"What faith would this vision give him, Jesus standing ready to welcome him, when he had 'endured to the end!'

"The right-hand of any one is considered the place of highest honour and respect, and this signified that Christ was now in the place of highest

honour. 'Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels, Thou crownedst Him with glory and honour.'

"Now, Jesse, repeat the next words of the Creed."

" 'From thence he shall judge the quick and the dead.'"

"From thence means, from that place; therefore, Christ will come from the right-hand of God to judge the world."

"Yes, mother."

"Prove it then from Scripture, but first tell me who are meant by the quick?"

"The living, those who have never died."

Jesse reads 2 Cor. v. 10, and Amelia, Acts x. 42.

"There is a beautiful description of the day of judgment in Rev. xx., beautiful and comforting for those who are joined to Jesus; but awful for those who are not in Him—for as death finds us, so we shall remain for ever and ever. We will read this account, and then it will be time for you to go to bed."



CHAPTER IV.

NOW, girls, I am quite ready."

"And so are we," said Jesse and Amelia.

"You remember, we are to begin at the words, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost.' This Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son. Prove this, Jesse."

(Jesse reads 1 John v. 7.)

"Our Saviour, shortly before His death, told His disciples He would send them 'the Holy Spirit of truth,' who would teach, comfort, and guide them, if they would receive Him into their hearts. And He will be with each one of us now upon the same conditions. We must, however, pray for Him, and let us remember it is

possible to make the Holy Spirit leave us, though He may once have dwelt in our heart. 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,' and 'Quench not the Spirit' (Eph. iv. 30; 1 Thess. v. 19), are two solemn commands, and enough to show this may be the case. And the history of King Saul teaches the same lesson (see 1 Sam. xvi. 14). It would be a nice occupation some day for you to find out the names and the offices of the Holy Spirit."

"What do you mean by the offices of the Holy Spirit?" asked Amelia.

"I am glad," said her mother, "you asked this, if you do not understand. In a common way of speaking, a person's office is his business or employment—what he, perhaps, undertakes to do for others. In applying this word to the Holy Spirit, we mean the work He undertakes for mankind; thus He is called a Comforter, a Guide, a Teacher, &c. Do you understand, now?"

"Oh, yes, quite, thank you."

“Now, it is time to take the next clause or sentence in the Creed, which is ‘the holy Catholic Church.’ First, tell me the meanings of the words ‘Catholic’ and ‘Church,’ and then we will try and find out why the Church is called ‘holy.’”

Jesse.—“*Catholic* means something which is universal, or all over the world.”

Amelia.—“The *Church* means God’s faithful people.”

“You are both right. ‘The Church’ comprehends the family of God in ‘earth and heaven,’ ‘the household of God,’ as some one calls it. Don’t you remember this hymn—

“Let saints below in concert sing
With those to glory gone
For all the servants of our King,
In *heaven and earth are One*.

One Family we dwell in Him,
One Church above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.”

"It is such a beautiful hymn, I should like you both to learn it."

Jesse.—"I know it already, and like it very much."

"I like it, too," said Amelia, "and will learn it as soon as possible."

"Now, tell me who is the 'Head of the Church?'"

"Jesus Christ."

"And if *He* is the Head of it, must not His members or people be holy?—for He is holy, and He commands us to be holy. Read 1 Pet. i. 15, 16."

"Christ is called the Head of the Church, in Eph. i. 22, 23."

"'The Communion of Saints.' Tell me what you understand by the word 'communion.'"

"I think it means being joined to," said Jesse. "Does it not also mean sharing with others?"

"Yes, both. The beginning of the word (*com*) means *with*. So we have union with, and *if* we

have union with others, we must share with them, and possess some things in common with them. It also signifies intercourse with others. Fellowship is another word for 'communion' in 1 John i. 7."

"Read Ephesians iv. 4—6, and you will find some of the subjects in which we have fellowship or communion with God's people, or as in the words of the Creed, 'the Saints.' We there see we have 'One Spirit' to help and teach us.

" 'One Lord,' who has redeemed us.

" 'One faith,' to keep us united to each other.

" 'One baptism,' which may mean it is only to be administered *once*; but also that only one manner of administering it is right, that is, in the name of the Trinity.'

" 'One God and Father,' to love and serve;

" 'One word of God,' to guide us;

" 'One hope of eternal life;' and

" 'One heaven' to look forward to.

"As you both grow older, you will understand

more and more of the comfort of the ' Communion of Saints.' Remember the Church of God is universal ; He has His members among all classes ; old and young, rich and poor, *none* need be excluded. We will now leave off, there will be plenty for another night."



CHAPTER V.

“COME, girls, we must begin at once, as I have an engagement by-and-by. You know we have to go on from, ‘The forgiveness of sins.’ Prove this from the Old Testament.”

Jesse reads Dan. ix. 9, 10.

“Now from the New.”

Amelia reads 1 John i. 8, 9.

“And look also at Neh. ix. 17; Psalm ciii. 3, cxxx. 4; and Eph. iv. 32.

“God’s forgiveness is so free and full, He is said to forget the sins that He pardons (Is. xliii. 25; Jer. xxxi. 34). This is the spirit we should pray for in our dealings with our fellow-creatures; remember the words in the Lord’s Prayer, ‘Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.’

"The next sentence is, 'The resurrection of the body.' You both know what is meant by this?"

"Oh yes, the rising again of the body from the dead."

"Can you prove that this resurrection will take place?"

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.' Where are these words? I know we used them at Easter," said Jesse.

"Here they are," said Amelia, "1 Cor. xv. 20, 21."

"Look also," said their mother, "at 1 Thess. iv. 14—16, and Rev. xx. 12—15. It now only remains for us to show our belief in 'the life everlasting.'"

Jesse.—"God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

“And will not Rom. vi. 23, and Rev. xxii. 5, do,” said Amelia?

“Certainly they will. And do you not remember the parable of the sheep and goats in Matt. xxv.? You can read the 41st and 46th verses. When speaking of the word *Amen*, at the end of the Prayers, I daresay you remember what I told you it meant.”

“‘So be it,’ or ‘May it be so.’”

“Right, but this explanation would be no sense at the end of the Creed. What do you think it can mean there then?”

“This is truth; or in one word, *truth*, does it not?” said Jesse.

“You are quite right; and this should lead us to be very careful how we repeat such sacred words as those of the Creed or the Prayers; that we do not merely repeat them with our lips, without thinking of them, or caring to understand them.”

“I am much pleased, my dear girls, to find how many chapters and verses you both know,

and were able to quote ; let me advise you always to be careful when you quote Scripture (that is, bring forward any verse to prove a subject), to repeat the words quite correctly, as if we once begin putting in our own words, we do not know what mistakes we shall bring ourselves or others into. Remember the precept in Deut. iv. 2, and the warning in Rev. xxii. 18, 19. I hope we shall all profit by these evening conversations on the Apostles' Creed ; perhaps, some day, we shall have some more on another part of the Prayer Book."

" Oh, thank you, mother," said both the girls ;
" we should like it very much."



THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.



THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

“TODAY, my dear children, we will begin our lessons on the Ten Commandments. These Commandments were given to Moses from Mount Sinai, by God Himself. How may they be divided?”

“Into two tables or parts: our duty towards God, contained in the first *four*, and our duty towards our neighbour, contained in the last *six*.”

“Are all the Commandments given to the Jews binding upon us now as Christians?”

Amelia.—“No; not the Ceremonial Laws.”

“What do you understand by the Ceremonial Laws?”

“Those which related to the service of the Tabernacle, the office of the Priesthood, and offering of the Sacrifices.”

“ Right ; these are now done away with : why ? ”

Jesse.—“ Because they were only types or shadows of something better.”

“ The sacrifices were a type of our Saviour’s offering up Himself, to take away our sins, which they never could do (Heb. x. 4 11), and the Priests are no longer needed, as there are no sacrifices to be offered up.”

“ You said, Amelia, that the Ceremonial Laws are no longer binding upon Christians—What are those laws to which every one is bound to yield obedience ? ”

“ The Moral Laws, which teach us our duty to God and man.”

“ What reason can there be for mentioning ‘ Exodus ’ and the ‘ house of bondage,’ when we say in answer to the question, ‘ Which be they ? ’ The same which God spake in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, saying, ‘ I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage.’ ”

Jesse.—“ I don’t really know. I am ashamed to

say I have never thought very much about that."

"God probably meant, by reminding the Israelites of His mercy in thus delivering them, to incite them to greater love and gratitude, and also to help them to remember *when* the Laws were given."

"St. Paul calls the Commandments 'The ministration of death,' because 'By the Law is the knowledge of sin;' and sin deserves nothing but death (Rom. vi. 23). Now let us take each Commandment in turn. Repeat the First, Jesse."

"'Thou shalt have none other gods but Me.'"

"This forbids the worship of any being but the One Lord God. Prove this doctrine from both the Old and New Testaments."

Amelia.—"Deut. v. 7; vi. 4, 5."

Jesse.—"Matt. iv. 10."

"Now the Second Commandment, *Amelia*."

"'Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in

heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them, for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and show mercy unto thousands in them that love Me, and keep My commandments.’ ”

“ This Commandment might, at first sight, appear a kind of continuation of the *First*, but it is not so in reality. The First forbids what? ”

“ Our worshipping any false gods.”

“ This one forbids our worshipping the True God in any manner that is displeasing to, or unworthy of Him. It says we are not to make any graven image to worship it, or try to make any representation whatever of God. Why should this be displeasing to God? ”

“ Because ‘ God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.’ ”

“Yes; God is invisible to mortal eyes, and will never allow His honour to be given to any other being. See Isa. xlii. 8.”

“How does God visit ‘the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him?’”

“That means He will visit, or punish them, in *this* world, not in the next.”

“Which then lasts the longer, God’s anger or His mercy?”

“His mercy, this is unto thousands in them that love Him and keep His Commandments.”

“What is the worship of false gods called?”

“Idolatry.”

“Idolatry, in a few words, is said to be the visible representation of an invisible God; and here we must leave off for to-night.”



THE THIRD AND FOURTH COMMANDMENTS.

“**N**OW we are ready to begin. Repeat the Third Commandment.”

“‘Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.’”

“By the *name* of the Lord is meant His whole Being and character. What do you understand by taking God’s name in vain?”

“All thoughtless use of God’s name, either in our conversation or in repeating the prayers.”

“Yes, and *rash* or *false* swearing is also strictly forbidden. Swearing, or taking an oath, as it is sometimes called, means calling upon God to witness, or prove the truth of what we say; and this Commandment requires us ‘to honour God’s

holy name and His Word, and to serve Him truly all the days of our life.' Now, Amelia, repeat the Fourth Commandment."

" 'Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.' "

" This is the only Commandment which has the word 'Remember' at the beginning of it, which should remind us of the great importance of it, and well would it be for us if we never forgot it."

" What is the meaning of the word Sabbath? "

" Rest."

" How do we keep this day holy? "

“By not treating it as a common day, setting it apart, as much as we possibly can, to the service and worship of God, either in *public* or *private*, learning all we can of Him and of our duty to Him.”

“Are all works forbidden on the Lord’s-day?”

Jesse.—“No, works of necessity, piety, or charity are never forbidden.”

“What is meant by God’s resting?”

Amelia.—“Leaving off, is it not.”

“Yes. God rested from, or left off His works. We are sure it was *not* because He was wearied,—and, therefore, required rest,—for read Isaiah xl. 28.”

“Why was the seventh day’s rest, by the Jews, changed to the first day’s rest, as we now have it?”

The two girls said they neither of them quite understood this, and begged their mother to explain it, who said, “The Jewish Sabbath was kept in memory of God’s resting from His work (the work of creation), and of the deliverance of the Israelites out

of Egypt (Ex. xx. 8, &c. ; Deut. v. 14, 15), but the Christian Sabbath (the first day) is kept in especial remembrance of our Lord's Resurrection, which took place on that day. The actual change of days is not mentioned in Scripture, but it is supposed that it took place very soon after the Resurrection, and with our Lord's sanction."

Yesse.—"What do you mean by our Lord's sanction?"

"By His leave, or that He approved it."

"Thank you. I quite understand about the change, now; and it is very pleasant to believe that Jesus allowed it, is it not?"

"Yes," said her mother, "it is, indeed; but now you must shut your books."



THE FIFTH AND SIXTH COMMANDMENTS.

“ **H**ERE we are, once more ready. Just tell me what the first four Commandments teach us, before we begin the Second Table.”

Both girls, “Our duty towards God.”

“And the last six?”

“Our duty towards our neighbour.”

“Prove from Scripture the duty of honouring and obeying our parents.”

“Deut. v. 16 and Matt. xv. 4,” said Jesse, “and Ephes. vi. 1, 2 ; Col. iii. 20.”

“What do you understand by ‘honouring your parents?’”

“Behaving towards them with love and respect, obeying their wishes, trying to please them in all things.”



“What is this Commandment called in Ephesians vi. 2?”

“Jesse reads—‘Honour thy father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise.”

“Which is?”

“Long life and happiness.”

“Does this refer only to this life?”

“‘The land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,’ meant Canaan, did it not?” said Amelia.

“It did to the Jews—but Canaan was only a type of our heavenly Canaan, which is quite as much a gift as Canaan was to them.”

“Now repeat the Sixth Commandment.”

“‘Thou shalt do no murder.’”

“By murder is meant the *unlawful* taking away the life of another person; this is, so to speak, the outward breaking of the Commandment; but it can be broken in spirit. How? Don’t you know? Look at 1 John iii. 15.”

Jesse reads, “‘Whosoever hateth his brother is

a murderer, and ye know that *no* murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.' ”

“ All unrighteous anger is forbidden (there is a right kind of anger remember), all malice and quarrelling too. When may man's life be taken away *lawfully* ? ”

“ If we kill anyone in trying to save our own life,” said Jesse.

“ And in war, too, may it not ? ” said Amelia.

“ Yes ; but you have left out one case. When people are taken before the judge, and it can be proved they are guilty of murder, what is done to them ? ”

“ They are hung.”

“ Hanging was the punishment formerly inflicted for a number of offences, such as stealing cattle, horses, &c. *Now*, people are fined or transported (that is, sent out of the country) for a certain number of years, sometimes for the rest of their lives ; and are only hung when they are convicted of wilful murder.”

“We have talked enough for to-night, so we will shut our books. You will find plenty to think of in what we have been studying.”



THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH COMMANDMENTS.

“**T**HOU shalt not commit adultery.’ This forbids, besides the outward act, all impurity in wishes or thought, all unchaste behaviour in speech, conduct, or dress. For we are commanded in our duty towards our neighbour ‘to keep our bodies in temperance, soberness, and *chastity*.’”

“What are our bodies called, Jesse?”

“Do you mean ‘Temples of God?’”

“Yes. See 1 Cor. iii. 17, and 1 Cor. vi. 19, where they are called ‘Temples of the Holy Ghost.’ God has redeemed our bodies; but if we defile them *with sin*, what will hereafter become of them?”

“They will be shut out of heaven.”

“Yes. See Rev. xxi. 27. Now, let us take the Eighth Commandment, ‘Thou shalt not steal.’”

“Simple stealing, as you know, means taking other people’s things, using them unlawfully; but a great deal is included in these words, ‘Thou shalt not steal.’ It requires that we be honest towards others: not deceiving or cheating them in any way; to ‘keep my hands from picking and stealing,’ &c.

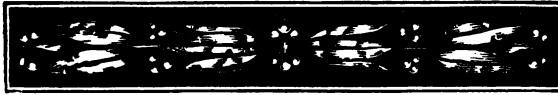
“What is meant by ‘picking’ as distinguished from ‘stealing?’”

“Taking little things, which are not likely to be found out.”

“I am sorry,” said her mother, “that many consider that these *little* robberies, as *they* call them, are no harm. I hope neither of you will ever deceive yourselves thus. If we would be ‘true and just in all our dealings,’ what kind of weights and measures must we use?”

“Just ones: the same for everyone. Look at Lev. xix. 35, 36; Deut. xxv. 13—16.”

“ Another dishonest action is borrowing money when we know we have no chance of being able to repay it ; or what is even worse, borrowing anything when we have no intention of returning it. Now, close your books, as we will leave the two last Commandments for next time.”



THE NINTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS.

“JESSE, will you tell Amelia I am ready. To-day we will talk about the Ninth Commandment, ‘Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.’ “What is bearing witness?”

“Telling what we know about anything, or of a person’s character.”

“Yes; we may either tell what we know, because we have seen or heard it, *or* we may tell what we have been previously *told*—both are bearing witness.”

“What are those witnesses called who relate what they have *seen*?”

“Eye-witnesses.”

“What does this command forbid?”

“ Bearing ‘ *false* witness,’ or what we know is not true.”

“ Just so ; how careful should we then be to try and find out the truth of anything we assert.”

“ In this Commandment is included ‘ all evil speaking, lying, and slandering.’ Now what is meant by slandering ? ”

Both the girls said they did not quite know.

“ It means saying bad things of others ; spreading false reports of anyone.”

“ Who is our neighbour ? ”

“ Everyone.”

“ Yes, everyone might, in God’s Providence, become so. I think the best answer I know is one which I heard a dear old clergyman give, when preaching about ‘ The Good Samaritan.’ He said, ‘ My neighbour is one to whom, in the Providence of God, I can do good.’ There was a collection after the sermon for ‘ the sick and wounded French and Germans ’ (in the late War, 1870). He added, ‘ The French and Germans are *now* our neighbours, because we can

do them good, though, perhaps, a year ago we should not have considered them as such.' Now repeat the last Commandment."

"'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his.'"

"By this commandment we are forbidden to wish very much for, or to set our hearts upon, anything which is not our own. Therefore, we must try to be satisfied and contented with what God has seen fit to give us. Remember we have each one of us much more than we deserve at God's hand. Can you tell me some characters in the Old Testament who were guilty of coveting?"

Jesse.—"Achan was one. We read about him a very little way back in Joshua."

"Who coveted the gifts his master had offered to a prophet? Look at 2 Kings v."

"Oh, I know now!" exclaimed *Amelia*. "Ge-hazi."

“Whose covetousness was in the end the cause of a murder?”

“Ahab’s. Jezebel sent and had Naboth murdered (1 Kings xxi.).”

“Who, in the New Testament, was a most striking example of covetousness?”

“I suppose you mean Judas Iscariot?”

“Yes, I do—his fearful end should be a warning to everyone not to indulge in covetousness.”

“And now, my dear children, we have come to an end of the Commandments, and I hope you have both learnt something from our evening conversations upon them.”

THE LORD'S PRAYER.





THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MY dear Children, I hope you are not weary of your old friends, Jesse and Amelia, and of their conversations with their mother. I propose, if you are not, to give you some more on the "Lord's Prayer;" if you are, you had better shut this book, or give it to someone else. But, anyhow, here are the conversations, or, "Evening Teachings from the Lord's Prayer."

"Of all the prayers in our possession, we can not find one so perfect or so beautiful as the one we call 'The Lord's Prayer.' Our Lord *Himself* gave it to His own disciples for their use, which is the reason of His name being given to it.

"The first clause, or division, 'Our Father,'

is called 'the invocation,' or 'calling upon.' Have we any right to call upon God as our Father?"

Amelia.—"Yes; our Lord taught us to do so when He gave us this prayer, and St. Paul says—'Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' (Rom. viii. 15.)"

"What does the word 'our' include?"

"Our friends and relations."

"Yes; but more than these: it really means all mankind. God may be said to be the Father of all mankind—

"(1) Because He created us, and created us too in His own image (Gen. i. 26, 27; Mal. ii. 10).

"(2) Because He redeemed us by His own blood (Ephes. i. 7; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; 1 John ii. 1, 2).

"(3) Because He sanctifies us (1 Cor. vi. 11).

"The word '*Our*' should also help to remind us that we must not be selfish, even in our prayers, but endeavour to follow our Divine Master's example (who even prayed for His

enemies, Luke xxiii. 34), as well as His precept, Matt. v. 44 ; and if our Father lives in Heaven, we, as His children, should prepare ourselves now, that we may live with Him there by-and-by."

" 'Hallowed be Thy Name.' "

" What is the meaning of the word 'Hallowed?' "

Jesse.—" Something separated, or set apart as holy."

Amelia.—" Something we must treat as holy."

" You are both right. God's name signifies His whole Being and character. Our duty, therefore, is to treat everything belonging to, or in any way relating to God, as *holy*, as set apart for that purpose. These words, 'Hallowed be Thy Name,' form the first petition. What is a petition?"

" Asking for something we want."

" 'Thy kingdom come.' "

" What is meant by Christ's kingdom?"

" His power and rule over us, is it not?"

" This is one meaning; *another* is the Gospel (as it means in Matt. xiii. 24, &c.)."

" Who are Christ's people, or His subjects?"

"All who believe in Him as their Saviour."

"Yes, and all those who try to keep His laws, who glorify His name, and use their efforts to spread the knowledge of His Gospel to those who have it not."

"Christ's kingdom is not an earthly one, but a spiritual one. Read Luke xvii. 20, 21. He must rule over our hearts. The words, 'Thy kingdom come,' include a petition (1) for ourselves, that Christ will reign in *our hearts*; (2) for the heathen, that they may acknowledge Him as their King; (3) that they and we may all be prepared for His second coming.

"What is the third petition?"

"'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.'"

"There are two meanings to the words 'God's will.' One is anything He wishes done, the other whatever He commands us to do. So there are two ways of *doing* God's will—one is by *active obedience*, the other by *passive obedience*. Passive obedience means bearing and suffering *quietly*

whatever God sees fit to lay upon us. It is said 'that all unhappiness lies in a separate will.' Let us then, indeed, pray that our will may be *one* with God's. Who do God's will in heaven?"

"The angels."

"Then our next endeavour must be to find out how the angels do God's will that we may imitate them. They give up their own wills entirely. They are so humble that they cast their crowns down upon the ground. They ask no questions, but are ready to minister to all. Some are active, some are passive; but each one is ready to change at any moment—the active ones to become passive; the passive ones to go forth in active obedience. They seek out the poor, and those perhaps little known on earth; they go forth for the little one's help; they smooth a dying pillow, and wait to waft the spirit homeward."

"'Give us this day our daily bread.'"

"In Eastern countries, such as those where our Lord lived, 'bread' signified *food* of any kind.

Who are included in the words *us* and *our* ?”

“All for whom we may pray.”

“And we may pray for all living ; therefore, these words include *everyone* in this world. *All* do not require the same amount or kind of food, though all require some. God knows just the right amount for each. Therefore, to Him alone can we pray, ‘Give us this day our daily bread.’ The words ‘this day’ and ‘daily bread’ should also lead us to be moderate in what we desire. We only need food for each day as it comes ; but still *all* thought for the morrow’s food is not forbidden, but only a restless and faithless thought.

“Once more these words refer not only to our bodily wants, but to those of our souls. It is as if we prayed thus, ‘Give us this day whatever we may each want for our souls and our bodies.’ You remember that Jesus calls Himself ‘the bread of life,’ because He will nourish and feed our souls’ (John vi. 35). Now read the next petition.”

“ ‘And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.’ ”

“To trespass is to cross over from one position, to another which is unlawful.

“In St. Matthew's Gospel (chap. vi.) the word ‘*debt*’ is used instead of ‘*trespass*.’ A debt is something we unlawfully possess, because it is another's; what we have no business with.

“What do you understand by this petition, Amelia ? ”

“That we ask God to forgive us our sins, because we are ready to forgive others.”

“Yes, or we think we mean this; but, alas! too many of us repeat these words with very little meaning. We will divide them into two parts, that we may understand them more easily. First, the *Prayer*, ‘Forgive us,’ &c. Sin is very hateful to God, and He wishes it to be so to us also. Now, if God had merely pardoned sin the very moment it was committed, this would *not* have been the case. Man would have thought it of very little consequence if he could so

easily be forgiven. But God Himself fixed upon a plan by which He is glorified, and to all Christians sin is at once rendered an abomination. God's only Son suffered death for every man, if they will only believe it! It is then only for the sake of Jesus we are forgiven. If we believe He bore the punishment due to our sins, we are free from it. God cannot punish sin *twice*.

“When we offer this petition let us not forget our friends, and indeed the whole Church, ‘for all have sinned.’

“But we must now consider, secondly, the condition or circumstances of this petition; if we may say it with reverence—the contract or covenant we make with God.

“Forgive us our trespasses, *as we* forgive them that ‘trespass against us.’ Perhaps you may understand it better if you read the words ‘*for*’ or ‘*because*’ instead of ‘*as we* forgive,’ &c.

“Some persons say of those who have offended or sinned against them, ‘I forgive but I cannot forget the injury.’ Now, would you like

God to deal thus with you? To forgive you, but not forget your sin? Again, would you like God to forgive you at some future time, which is unknown, but not when the petition is made? This is how many forgive. Some persons are so proud they say they forgive, but cannot lower themselves to tell their debtors so. Would there be any happiness if God had merely forgiven us, but had not given us any assurance that He had done so? Surely not. Let us for the future be more careful not to mock God, by saying 'we forgive,' when we don't intend to do so, or we shall bring a curse and not a blessing upon ourselves.

“‘And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.’ The word *temptation* has two meanings in Scripture. Can you tell me what they are?”

“One is to try or prove us, as when ‘God did tempt Abraham.’ (Gen. xxii. 1.)”

“And the other is the act of drawing us into sin,” said Jesse.

"Yes. See James i. 13, 14."

"The words we are now considering seem to refer to each person's besetting sin, as if we should pray, 'Lead us not where our chief sin will show itself'; or 'Lead us through the trials we may each meet with in safety!'

"We must be careful not to use this petition, and then rush wilfully where we are aware we shall most likely be tempted;—to particular places or particular company, where we have fallen before.

"Temptation is 'the border land of sin,' and he that keeps *near* the border is soon *within* it! Nevertheless, let us not shrink from going anywhere at duty's call, as *there* we may be sure of God's protection; and if 'He be *for* us, who can be *against* us?' (Rom. viii. 31.)

"Now, Jesse, read to the end of the Prayer."

"'For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.'"

"These words are called 'The Doxology,' by which we mean, giving glory to God. From

God comes *all* power in this world bodily or spiritually. We may seem to act and think by our own strength, but 'in *Him* we live and move and have our being:' and we are not 'sufficient of ourselves to think anything, as of ourselves, *but* our sufficiency is of God.'

"The kingdoms of this world will crumble and decay, but God's kingdom, of which we are all inheritors, will remain for ever and ever.

"The word *Amen*, at the end of the Lord's Prayer, remember means both '*truth*' and '*So be it.*' *Truth*, as referring to the words of the Doxology, and '*So be it*' as referring to the petitions of it."





